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The New Indian Express
Wishes its readers a

Our offices and press will remain closed today and there will be no issue of the paper on Friday

₹100 LAKH CR MASTER PLAN FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The master plan for multi-modal connectivity aims to develop infrastructure to reduce logistic costs and boost the economy

PROJECTS TO GET MORE POWER, SPEED

PM Gati Shakti, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, seeks to raise cargo-handling capacity and cut the turnaround time. It will speed up projects by connecting all departments on one platform, Modi said, adding that the infra schemes of various ministries and state governments will be designed and executed with a common vision

INTEGRATED PLANNING ACROSS MINISTRIES

- A digital platform, Gati Shakti will bring 16 ministries including Railways and Roadways together for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infras connectivity projects
- It will incorporate the infra schemes of various ministries and state govts like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, etc

$1.5 trillion

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE EXPECTED TO BENEFIT FROM GATI SHAKTI

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Action, reaction inevitable: CM on moral policing

Says one shouldn't hurt society's sentiments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mangaluru

CHIEF Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who had said his government will deal with 'moral policing' with an iron hand following an incident in Bengaluru a month ago, did a volte-face in Mangaluru on Wednesday saying, "Action and reaction are bound to happen when there is no morality in society."

When reporters sought his reaction to BJP MLA Umanath Kotian escorting two persons accused in a 'moral policing' incident from a police station after their release on interim bail, the chief minister refused to give a direct reply and said, "It is a sensitive matter. There are many sentiments in society. One needs to behave in a manner that will not hurt such sentiments. If the sentiments are hurt, then action and reaction are bound to happen."

In the same breath, he said that apart from maintaining law and order, maintaining social harmony is also the government's responsibility and appealed to everyone to cooperate with the government. "Youth should behave so as not to hurt the sentiments of society. This is a social issue," he stated.

CONTINUED ON: P4

SIDDU SLAMS BOMMAI

Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah has strongly criticised CM Basavaraj Bommai for his remarks on moral policing, saying that the government is trying to protect anti-social elements instead of putting them behind bars. Former High Court judge Justice Nagamohan Das and activist Vinay Sreenivasa said that instead of condemning moral policing, the CM is attempting to justify it. P4

RIL concedes its Zeel, not interested now

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

AFTER its name was dragged into the boardroom battle between Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) and Invesco Developing Markets Fund, Reliance Industries (RIL) on Wednesday revealed that it had proposed to merge its media properties with Zee at "fair valuations" but never resorted to any hostile transaction.

"The valuations of Zee and our properties were arrived at based on the same parameters," an RIL statement read. It also clarified that differences arose between ZEEL MD Punit Goenka and Invesco over the founders' bid to raise stake by subscribing to preferential warrants, following which the merger plan was dropped.

Earlier on Wednesday, Invesco said it had tried facilitating a Reliance-Zee deal. "The role of Invesco, as Zee's single largest shareholder, was to help facilitate that potential transaction and nothing more," it said, responding to Goenka's charge that it tried to push a one-sided deal. Though Zee had not mentioned Reliance in its statement to exchanges on Tuesday, it talked about two Invesco representatives presenting a deal to Goenka "involving the merger of the Company and certain entities owned by a large Indian group (strategic group)".

"As per the deal presented to me, upon completion of the aforesaid merger, the Strategic Group would hold majority stake of the merged entity and I would be responsible for running the operations of the merged entity as its MD and CEO," Goenka said, adding the deal was not in the best interest of public shareholders and he was uncomfortable with the way Invesco was pushing the deal.

According to Zee, Reliance's deal valued its shares at ₹220 apiece, with total valuation of the public shareholding of the company at ₹21,129 crore.

Manmohan HOSPITALISED

Former PM Manmohan Singh was admitted to AIIMS in Delhi on Wednesday, after he complained of weakness, following a fever.

EXPRESS READ

Adani takes over T'puram airport

T'puram: The Adani Group will formally take over the Thiruvananthapuram Airport early on Thursday, even as the Kerala Government, which has been vocal against the move, has remained silent in the recent past. P7

CENTRE LOOKS AT CORPORATE FUNDING TO PROTECT WILDLIFE?

RICHA SHARMA @ New Delhi

IN a move that could open up the country's over 700 protected and wildlife areas to the private sector, the Union environment ministry is exploring options to seek corporate funding for the management of wildlife protected areas like national parks and sanctuaries due to inadequate budgetary funding.

The ministry is considering a proposal to establish a National Foundation for Resource Mobilization for Wildlife Conservation (NFRMWC) to raise funds. The matter was placed before the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) last month held under the chairmanship of environment minister Bhupender Yadav. He advised wider consultation on the matter.

Cautioning the ministry over the move, NBWL member Dr R Sukumar said care should be taken to ensure that the corporate sector does not have a disproportionate say in the decision making process of the trust.

The NFRMWC is envisaged as a Government-owned public trust, which will be registered under the Societies Act. It is expected to provide a range of activities for private or corporate funding and will have flexibility in terms of resource mobilisation, operations and collaboration with other organisations for the purpose of wildlife conservation, including zoos.

ROAD RAGE

Audi driver shoots at bike rider

ENS @ Bengaluru

IN a case of extreme road rage, the driver of an Audi car pulled out a firearm and shot at a biker in Bengaluru on Wednesday night. The two-wheeler rider escaped unhurt as the bullet zipped past without hitting him. The incident took place near MS Ramaiah Medical College on Wednesday night.

The police identified the biker as Anil, an ambulance driver. It is said that there was an altercation between the car driver and Anil as the latter did not give way for the car. When the fight escalated, the car driver pulled out a gun and shot at the biker. As he was driving away from the spot the driver missed the target and sped away. The incident occurred near the back gate of MS Ramaiah Medical College around 9.25 pm.

The Yeshwanthpur police registered a case under the Arms Act and are searching for the accused. They are collecting CCTV footage to trace the vehicle and identify its driver.

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